

Emergency Services Advisory Council  
October 16, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Michael Robinson, Michael Guerin, Rick Baker, JJ Lynott, Tim Legore, Michael Karolenko, Dr. Stephanie Kemp, David Coe, George Wentz, Robert Ruch (virtual)

Members Absent: Blane Wright, Scott Dickson, Dan Plunkert, Brett Six, Joe Brown

Guests: Captain Max Nickey (DFEMS), Mary Carole Stiffler- CCVESA Treasurer, Heather Blum- CCVESA Secretary

Chairman Baker opened the meeting at 19:00 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

David Coe made a motion to approve the September meeting minutes. JJ Lynott seconded. The motion was unanimously passed.

Board Member Comments:

JJ Lynott attended the Academic Programs Open House at Manchester Valley High School this evening. Manchester and Hampstead fire companies, along with CCDFEMS, were there to recruit and promote the EST program. He commented that it was a great event.

Director/Chief's Report: Report attached.

-Chief Robinson thanked Rick Baker, Mary Carole Stiffler and Lt. Mike Karolenko for joining him to accept the Fire Prevention Week proclamation from the Board of Commissioners (BOC) on October 7<sup>th</sup>.

-Chief Robinson gave an update on the hiring process: DFEMS is averaging 7 new employees per month. He plans to change from a 28 day to 14 day cycle which requires a change to Chapter 37. There are currently 53 vacancies.

Commissioner's Report: Nothing additional to report

Medical Director's Report:

-Dr. Kemp reported that DFEMS is working on two grant opportunities. One is the MIEMSS Cardiac Device grant which will allow us to obtain two LP-35

monitors. The second grant is an education grant that will allow a limited number of clinicians to be trained in advanced airway management, advanced resuscitation techniques and critical care medicine.

- Dates for recertification will be out soon. ALS skills will be imbedded.
- DFEMS has received approval for dive medicine. Training will be in the spring.
- An EMS Continuing Education session on crime scene preservation is being held on Tuesday, Oct. 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Firefighter/EMT Julio Deras has been added as a Pediatric Champion. He is the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the county. He will work with the pediatric division of MIEMSS to improve care.
- Firefighter/EMT Tyler Jaworksi has been nominated to be the BLS career representative for the review committee.
- DFEMS's whole blood program is being built out. Howard County has shared their online training modules to assist us.
- The quarterly meeting with Carroll Hospital Center is Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Assistant Chief Zaney is working on standardizing EMS equipment. More information will be forthcoming.
- The IVT program is being opened to volunteers now that there is a full staff of educators.

#### CCVESA President's Report:

- George Wentz reported that Bradley Wright was hired as the new Training Center Coordinator was hired.
- More students are still needed for the EST class planned to start in January.

#### Committee Reports:

EMSOPS – David Coe reported that EMSOPS met last month. They found no issues with EMS policy 3.14 Care After Pronouncement of Death.

FROPS – Chief Tim Legore reported that he is meeting with Deputy Chief Supko tomorrow in reference to revamping some SOPs. SOPs are on hold at the FROPS level.

- Chief Legore shared that Winfield had a house burn exercise on Sat. Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### Old Business:

- FY25 Budget Issues

- Chief Robinson stated that the \$320k that was given to CCVESA to staff the remaining stations has run out as of October. Action from the BOC is needed to transfer additional money from DFEMS payroll budget. These are funds that have not been spent from the vacant positions.
  - The group discussed how soon DFEMS can expect to staff the remaining stations and whether the immediate focus should be on filling current vacancies. Chief Robinson still hopes to staff New Windsor as quickly as possible.
  - David Coe emphasized the needs for definitive dates for DFEMS staffing of stations.
  - Captain Nickey stated that December 19<sup>th</sup> would be the earliest DFEMS could staff the next station.
  - Commissioner Guerin requested data related to step increases. He emphasized the need to start those conversations now in preparation for the next budget.
  - Commissioner Guerin is in support of the county providing the funding to staff EMS and FADOs for the remaining three stations through January and plans to bring the issue to open session.
  - It was clarified that the request would be retroactive starting October 1.
  - Chief Robinson discussed that if the BOC approves providing the funding to CCVESA, he wants to do a voucher system for accountability.
- Policy 3.14 Care After Pronouncement of Death
    - David Coe made a motion to approve policy 3.14 Care After Pronouncement of Death. Mike Karolenko seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.
- Volunteer Background Check Policy
    - The group discussed how frequently checks should be required. The current vendor being used for volunteer background checks does not provide ongoing monitoring.
    - For DFEMS employees, Sheriff and 911, fingerprinting is done in house and monitoring is tied to the fingerprinting.
    - The group discussed what should be done if someone refuses to complete the background. Mike Karolenko suggested that refusal become an additional disqualifier. Their LOSAP would not be jeopardized but they would be disqualified from

participation/active membership and dropped from county insurance.

- David Coe suggested there be a code of conduct for volunteers.
  - JJ Lynott mentioned that the process needs to be convenient and accessible for volunteers.
  - Rick Baker stated that Callie Williams will draft the language change for the additional disqualifier and it will be discussed at the next ESAC meeting.
- FY26 Budget Issues
    - Chief Robinson is no longer requesting two Safety Officer positions. The Training Officer positions are a higher priority.
    - Chief Robinson clarified that if the chase cars medics are upgraded to Lieutenants they will be responsible for supervision at stations that do not currently have Lieutenants, plus QA/QI and upgrading BLS units.
    - The group discussed how the chase cars are currently being utilized.
    - Mike Karolenko feels that, while upgrading the chase cars is a good move, best practice is to have a supervisor at each station. He feels we need to re-engage with the strategic plan.
    - Currently the Shift Commanders or Dr. Kemp do QA for the chase car medics. Capt. Nickey shared that QA is done within 4 days. eMeds reports are required to be done within 24 hours of the call.
    - Dr. Kemp added that 20-25 calls per month are reviewed by the QA/QI committee. There are different actions taken based on the level of perceived offense. Those employees that repeatedly have issues meet with Dr. Kemp or Assistant Chief Zaney.
    - David Coe feels that upgrading the EMS chase car medics would give them a more clearly defined role. Currently they have the duties of a supervisor yet are not supervisors.
  - Recruitment/Retention
    - Chairman Baker stated it is imperative that there is a recruitment/retention plan in place for CCVESA.
    - CCVESA is actively seeking someone to work on recruitment, retention and social media. It is challenging because they have to use their own funds. It is unlikely that this will be a priority in the county's budget. Other issues, such as building upgrades, will take priority when it comes to budget requests.

- Chairman Baker suggested incentives such as tuition reimbursement, paying for required certifications or a stipend.
- Commissioner Guerin likes the idea of trying to make Community College more affordable for the 18-30 year old age group and feels this may have a positive impact on fire department recruitment.

#### New Business:

- Joint meeting between the BOC and ESAC
  - Chair Baker stated that we are still looking into November open session dates. November 21<sup>st</sup> was suggested.
- Statistics
  - The group reviewed statistics put together by Data Analyst, Katie Spurrier. Dispatch time to arrived time was added to the report.
  - There is still an ongoing issue with mutual aid data due to the way it is entered in CAD.

#### Action Items:

1. Callie will draft the language to add the additional disqualifier to the Volunteer Background Check policy.

Mike Karolenko made a motion to adjourn. JJ Lynott seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 21:08.



## Report to ESAC

October 16, 2024

Chief Michael W. Robinson, Director

**Fire Prevention Week:** Began on Sunday, 10/6 and ran through Saturday. Mt. Airy had a well-attended open house which we supported with our on-duty crews. Westminster held their open house on Saturday, and we participated with our on-duty crews. Thanks to Chairman Baker for representing ESAC at the Commissioners proclamation for Fire Prevention Week. We are also participating with numerous school and other prevention activities last week and throughout the month. Remember that Fire Prevention/Community Risk Reduction is an ongoing function and we do make an impact in saving lives.

**Staffing (VFCs):** I have met with the treasurer of CCVESA, and she has provided me with data that suggests that beginning on October 1 the \$320K that was budgeted for the remaining volunteer stations has been fully expended. I have met with our budget analyst and have discussed. This is not a simple transfer of funds as previously discussed but will take the action of the Commissioners and their approval in order to move forward with this. I recognize that this may create a burden for those remaining companies. I am focusing on this area until it can be resolved. In the interim the companies should be using their EMS billing funding and accounting for the total costs. Since there is currently no funding available, I will need to go through a process for this to occur and I have begun that process. The below are the approximate costs that will continue until we have our hiring of positions in place which currently total 53 vacancies.

**Cost analysis:** New Windsor, Union Bridge and Lineboro

Position type	Weekly	Monthly	Quarterly
FADO (22.18)	\$1,109(50hrs.)	\$4,880 (220 hrs.)	\$14,300 (650hours)
EMT (20.00)	\$3,360 (168hrs.)	\$14,880 (744 hrs.)	\$44,160 (2208 hrs.)
Paramedic (24.00)	\$4,032 (168 hrs.)	\$17,856 (744 hrs.)	\$52,992 (2208 hrs.)
Station (66.18)	<b>\$8,501</b>	<b>\$37,616</b>	<b>\$111,452</b>
X3 stations	<b>\$25,503</b>	<b>\$112,848</b>	<b>\$334,356</b>

- Cost is exclusive of payroll tax, FICA and related costs.
- Does not subtract ongoing billing funds.

**Budget:** We are beginning our development of the FY-26 budget and DFEMS requests were due last week. We anticipate another challenging budget year given uncertainty with revenues and the fact that there were no tax increases for FY-25. I had a great meeting with the CCVESA budget chair Chief Joe Dennis to begin some preliminary discussions for the VFC budgets. We need to be prepared and have data to support our requests.

On the DFEMS side with recommendations from ESAC we are going to be asking for the upgrade of the 12 ALS car positions to lieutenants. This will require upgrades and no new positions. This will assure supervision for EMS incidents and will reflect the increasing

responsibilities for these positions. In addition, this will assist us with enhanced regional supervision of our career personnel. We are also requesting two lieutenants (daywork) to be assigned to the PSTC. They would perform a number of duties including continuing education, compliance training, recruit training, academy status courses, assist with EST and cover as incident safety officers. The prerequisite for this position will be current MICRB credentials. Ideally one of these positions would also be an EMS instructor so we can increase our number of EMT refreshers.

We are also going to request of return of the 12 floater positions that were lost in the FY 25 budget, and we are determining how many additional floaters we will need to support the leave needs of 220 field personnel given up to 8 allowed off/shift. These would all be new positions. I have suggested that we apply for a SAFER grant but have not yet been given a direction if we can proceed to pursue the grant.

Other areas of the budget will be for an increase in the PPE budget to allow DFEMS employees who are also volunteers to have a second set of PPE. We are also looking for some additional funding to establish an ICS command simulation center. We also are going to continue with medic replacements and are requesting 3 units/budget v. the two we currently have. Other vehicles to be requested include additional Tahoes for reserve status, a replacement reserve engine and pick ups for the training lieutenants.

I will await the wishes of the CCVESA regarding some recruitment/retention initiatives as well as LOSAP enhancements and a loan fund for station repairs. Again, we have our wish list, but it will all be dependent on the budget/revenue outlook.

**Staffing (Career):** We are currently in the hiring process and on boarding of some recently hired personnel. We had seven (7) additional personnel that began on October 10, and they are in their two-week orientation and at this time they will fill vacancies that are in the existing stations. This will allow us to cut back on overtime staffing which has led to multiple instances of needing to use mandatory holdovers to staff stations.

We staffed Pleasant Valley on October 10. A transfer list has been sent out and followed up with GO #9-3-24 with new assignments. We are in the process of 8 conditional offers for new employees, and they will begin on 11/14/24 and will have a two-week orientation. There are also 10 additional personnel who were successful with the written test, and we are now testing them for skills, PAT and giving interviews. Following Pleasant Valley, we can't yet give a date for New Windsor. Given our slow rate of hiring it will likely go into CY 25 before staffing is complete. We have been seeing some turnover/resignation in recent weeks with the resignation of two employees and two others pending. We are evaluating some of the specifics in our hiring process which could improve our applicant pool. We are also doing a cost analysis of hiring EMTs who would then attend a DFEMS academy to provide the rest of their credentials as FF/EMTs. We currently have nearly 60 positions to be filled. More to follow.

The volume of ALS units that are going out of jurisdiction is being looked at. We are continuing to train our new FF/EMT hires as IV technicians, and we will be allowing EMTs to do 12 lead ECGs in the field. This will lessen our scene time and absorb some of the impact of

not being able to staff all ALS. We are evaluating our EMS data daily to look at some alternatives to our ALS staffing. This could include a fourth ALS chase unit on at least a temporary basis if there is an identified need.

**Incident Reporting:** We have been approved and have ordered the ESO software. We must now develop the implementation phase to do the training and orientation to ESO/NERIS and we will cut over to the new system by late 2025. Katie Spurrier our data analyst is heading up this project and FROPS is represented with Chiefs Hipsley and Ruch. Rick Baker, Richard Koons and several other volunteers are also on the group. This will result in a single silo and possibly a single FDID although there are many questions to be answered as we move towards full implementation as well as archived data migration. This is currently ongoing.

**SOPs:** The recently approved SOPs have been posted and are now in effect. We are continuing to address many additional areas and Chief Supko is working with FROPS on a number of operational areas.

**Vehicles/procurement:** We have received the new vehicle (Tahoe) for the Deputy Chief and it awaits its upfitting with emergency equipment. Chief Zaney has also been issued a Tahoe and will provide additional EMS coverage while on duty. We are moving quickly on the second FY-25 medic unit and will be presented to the Commissioners for approval and will be a Road Rescue F550 as we were able to take over the cancelled Gamber unit and this will allow about a 4–6-month completion. Our three Horton ambulances/Ford F-550s are complete and we expect delivery by late October. We did an inspection trip to Horton on October 8 -9 and did a comprehensive inspection so they should be delivered next week. There are also two additional units on the line for a total of 5 units that should be placed in service by late November. We are finalizing our specs and in discussions with several dealers/manufacturers. We are also looking at our ability to expend some of our EMS billing revenue and add additional medic units as our current reserve fleet and several volunteer units are having mechanical issues and we must address the limited life span that remains on several units. We have received approval and replaced the motor in A-127 consistent to our maintenance policy under the MOU. Our goal is to upgrade to 3 units each fiscal year v. the current two units.

Our greatest challenge is having enough reserve cars available as we will now have 6 Tahoes, 3 Explorers and three reserves in our fleet as well as 9 medic units by early 2025.

Our next challenge is the replacement of the reserve engine which is nearing the end of its life cycle. A new replacement reserve will cost around \$800,000 or greater. I am in preliminary discussions with fleet and budget on this. This unit will be owned by the county and once approved we are anticipating a 3-4yr. delivery. We will create a committee to determine the specifics and subsequent specs. This will be at least 1500 GPM with a 1000-gallon tank, and we will follow the new NFPA 1910 standard. We probably need more than just one reserve and will look at justifications in that area? This has been placed in the budget for FY-26

**EMS Billing:** We are doing well with our EMS billing revenues. We asked all remaining companies to join our billing as of July 1, 2024. That has not happened. We will transition the billing of the remaining VFCs as they come on board with DFEMS staffing. Until that occurs, they



will continue to receive their revenue and we will need to manage all billing. You will still continue to receive revenues from your previous billing companies and joining with us know you will continue to receive your revenues until our staffing of your station begins.

In our first year of billing with only six stations we brought in \$5.7 million in revenues and will recoup about \$1 million additional in uncollected billing and reimbursement for Medicaid (state medical assistance) We are expecting as high as \$8 million for the current year. I am currently working with the administration to develop guidelines for investment of these funds for EMS enhancement to include medic units, electronics, stretchers, ventilators and other EMS related equipment. We will also use these funds for advanced training and continuing education for our providers both career and volunteer. We have ordered 10 of the new model Lifepak 35s to begin an attritional replacement for our cardiac monitors which are at the end of their life cycle. These have begun to arrive. Chief Zaney along with Dr. Kemp is putting together a plan to advance our standard of care to include new skills such as whole blood, RSI, ventilators and other areas. Please keep in mind that all of this will require approval through budget and then by the commissioners as this is county funding and not specifically DFEMS funds. Our goal is that EMS revenues can be reinvested into system enhancement and continuity.

**Volunteer Backgrounds:** These are not progressing at the rate we anticipated, and Callie is working to answer some questions as we develop a related SOP that will address some issues. These are still considered essential to assure safety and quality among volunteer membership. The policy will be an initial background check and then we will enroll the members into a data base monitoring program that will provide notifications to DFEMS and then we will push them out to your company. We would like to discuss this evening and Callie has a draft SOP.

**Honor Guard:** This unit has received a number of participants and will be deployed for ceremonies, funerals, details and mutual aid events as required. We will provide the training. We will have an organizational meeting in the next week and initially will have a 6-8-person unit. Interested personnel can still join by emailing Callie an expression of interest. Training will begin as well, and our first task will be to present the colors at our 11/21 promotional and pinning ceremony.

Our other initiative is to form a **Commendations Board**. This group will be a 5-person board with representation from: ESAC, CCVESA, IAFF, FROPS, and a DFEMS employee. A chair will be elected internally, and this group will develop award types, criteria, and design of both heroic as well as merit awards. An SOP will then be drafted, and the goal will be to begin an annual awards cycle based on the calendar year. This group will not supplant company level, chamber of commerce or other awards but will standardize DFEMS awards with an independent group to investigate and validate these awards. Our representatives including ESAC have been identified and I am setting up a meeting in the next several weeks.

**Training Requirements/Position Descriptions:** This was recently discussed at the training committee meeting and is nothing new. FROPS has discussed and will have representatives as well. As we are now four years into DFEMS and much longer since CCVESA established criteria, I would like to move forward in the following areas:

1. **Officer requirements:** lieutenant through Company Chiefs. This would be based on the NFPA 1021 standards and would go into effect on 1/1/2027 which would allow a two-year window for training/upgrading. A premise of this would be that any current/incumbent officers are grandfathered to their current positions. Should a current officer not be reappointed and then seek a position then they would need to meet the new criteria.
2. **Position descriptions:** Similar to DFEMS employees there would exist a standardized set of position titles with associated training requirements. A grandfathering process would be in place consistent to that of the officer requirements.
3. **Officer deployment/Chain of Command:** A review of the current policy and an assessment of titles and related responses. This would include radio titles, response parameters (first due v. beyond) and the use of the current BC and duty officer procedures in an effort to achieve consistency countywide.

I envision this direction to be facilitated by a joint committee of training personnel and at least two FROPs representatives. Chief Brothers will oversee the group and recommendations/package would be developed for consideration in April 2025.

**SAVE the DATE:**

We have had a number of promotions in the field since the summer. This includes paramedics, FF/Paramedics and internal FADOs. The command staff (four chiefs) beginning in October will be coming to stations for a “pinning”/Promotional ceremony for these positions. These will likely occur during the day, and we will notify each of you as to the details. In addition, on November 21, 2024, at Winter’s Mill HS we will have a “pinning” and promotion ceremony for some 50+ new employees. Also, promotions of the four captains, EMS AC and the DC Operations. This is a Thursday and an A shift. We would request your assistance to fill some staffing gaps for about four hours to facilitate this ceremony. DC Supko will provide more details. Also, we will send invitations to all companies if you wish to attend.

**OSHA Fire Brigade Standard:** There has been a lot of discussion on various levels on this proposal that would challenge the very core of the Fire/EMS service. Formal hearings will begin on this in November. All of the state organizations are following this and have sent correspondences to OSHA. Our national elections will also have impact on this potential standard change. This is also an unfunded mandate, and the requirements are significant. I’m sure that Charlie Simpson will have a further update on this.

Respectfully submitted,

*Chief Michael W. Robinson*

MWR/mr

C: Presidents/Chiefs  
CCVESA -officers